THE

FAIR SEX

VINDICATED,

FROM

FOLLY and EXTRAVAGANCE.

AN

ESSAY.

By the Rev. JAMES PENN,

Vicar of Clavering, Eſſex, Domeſtic Chaplain to Earl Gower, and Lecturer of St. Ann's Aldersgate.

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SERMONS

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS.

1. No Salvation through Faith without good Works.
2. Pleas for the Omiſſion of good Works examined, and confuted.
3. The Excellency of the Liturgy preached on St. Mark's Day.
4. } The Reaſoanbleneſs and Importance of Free-think-
5. } ing in Religion.
6. The Nature of Repentance, what it is, and what is not, with Reaſons for the Practice of it.
7. Motives for Repentance, its Efficacy and Comforts, with a general Exhortation to it from the preſent State of Things.

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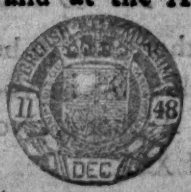

THE

Fair Sex vindicated, &c.

TO vindicate the character of the innocent and undeſerving from calumny and reproach, hath been ever eſteemed the mark of an ingenuous and benevolent diſpoſition. A fairer proſpect of acquiring that title cannot be offered, than from the preſent undertaking. It may be difficult to execute it with ſucceſs, becauſe it is oppoſing vulgar errors, in which a man frequently riſks the credit of his underſtanding, without any advantage in reverſion. The cauſe, however, is fair, though it hath been maletreated from Adam to this preſent time. It hath had few, if any, ſincere advocates. Commendations have generally ended in ſevere reflections; in which ill-nature hath oftentimes exceeded truth. When loſt in admiration of their virtues, and unwilling to acknowledge a ſuperiority, we ſeek relief from ſcandal and defamation.

It might have been expected, that ſome fair one would have apologized for her ſex: That it hath not been done may have proceeded rather from modeſty, than inability; who had rather ſuffer reproach wrongfully, than reproach juſtly. Who then is to undertake it? Are not the men unwilling and afraid, leſt by ſpeaking the truth they ſhould ſay too much in their praiſe, and by giving them their due, they might leſſen their own weight and authority? It is the common practice of little minds, to rail and exclaim againſt ſuperior worth and merit, with the fond hopes of acquiring reputation by it: And it hath not always proved unſucceſsful. This falſe and low humour hath been ſo much encouraged againſt the fair, that a cuſtom once thought to have been peculiar to them, hath by conſtant uſe become our own.

To ſilence the preſent, and prevent future clamours, and procure them that reſpect and civility, which the tenderneſs and delicacy of their ſex, if not their merit claim, we have undertaken their defence. What is written, we hope, will be received with temper and candour, as we are entirely diſintereſted; being rather prejudiced againſt them, if we are to form our judgment of things according to vulgar notions.

Before we vindicate the daughters, it may not be impertinent to offer ſomething in vindication

dication of the mother; who has been abuſed and reviled in all ages, for what ſhould rather be an object of pity than reſentment; whoſe misfortune it was, not fault, that ſhe was not created impeccable.* It may not be eaſy to bring the mind to think well of thoſe, of whom we have entertained a light or mean opinion; nor to look upon thoſe opinions, which time and cuſtom have eſtabliſhed, to be wrong. Errors, when they favour our vanity, or excuſe our follies, meet with a too kind reception, and are the longeſt retained; they are with difficulty removed, when authorized by antiquity, and ſupported by learning.

Our original parents have been frequently, but unjuſtly, blamed by their offspring, for what they are equally blameable, the tranſgreſſing the divine commands. We are now as little governed and directed by reaſon, as they once were; the laws of God of as little force and obligation; and our paſſions and ſenſes as ſtrongly ſolicit and allure to criminal gratifications.

Some have been ſo weak, and ſo ignorant of themſelves, as to have imagined, that had they been placed in the ſame delightful ſituation, they ſhould have retained their innocence; and not to indulge a vain, and, which proved to be, a fatal curioſity, have ſought for

* Eve, whoſe miſtake hath ſerved for a conſtant reproach of the fair.

greater

greater knowledge, or coveted more pleaſing enjoyments. But can we now maintain our innocence? Why ſhould it then be thought that we could have preſerved it?

It is not the preſent deſign to take notice of the reflections thrown out againſt the unhappy pair; their guilt needs no aggravation. It was affliction enough to them that they had offended ſo gracious a creator, and excluded themſelves, and their yet pure and untainted offspring, from the bliſsful enjoyment of an earthly paradiſe. Our intention is to extenuate, not excuſe the crime of one, whom none of us, had we beheld, could have blamed; none of us but would, as Adam did, have ſinned with her; or would not have died, rather than have lived without her. He was comfortleſs before he had her, he was rather unfortunate, than unhappy in having her; and he would have been miſerable, had he not continued with her. To whom ſhould he communicate his joys, if joys he could have had any, when he had no being like himſelf to converſe with? What miſery inexpreſſible to have been deprived of happineſs, little as it is now prized, then ſcarce enjoyed! Without whom, exiſtence would not have been deſirable. Adam confeſſed as much, by the uneaſineſs he expreſſed, before he received her, and God al-

allowed the uneaſineſs to have been juſt, by beſtowing upon him a conſort.

That ſex, who is on ſeveral accounts the ſource of all the happineſs we enjoy, is commonly, but ungenerouſly, complained of, as the cauſe of all the calamities we ſuffer. For allowing, that by the woman's miſtake ſin was introduced into the world,* by the ſame means the guilt of it was cancelled: And if Eve, through the weakneſs, rather than the fault of human nature, expoſed us to everlaſting puniſhment, by the ſeed of the bleſſed virgin everlaſting glory is offered to us.

Ceaſe we then from complaints againſt Eve, and no more upbraid the daughters for the parent's fault; who, though they have too often the leaſt, are deſerving of the higheſt reſpect. Men of ſenſe and judgment know their value and merit: And none, except thoſe of little underſtanding, exclaim againſt them; to palliate and excuſe their own follies, they detract from their worth.

There may be ſome of the ſex no great honour, nor ornament to it: But of theſe there are few, who are ſo through their own fault. It

* Allowing her crime to have been great, was not the puniſhment inflicted on her, and her ſex, equally great? *In ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children, and thy huſband ſhall rule over thee.* The ſenſe of this divine ſentence is obvious: The former part of too ſeverely felt by many of the ſex, to require an explanation; and the latter part of it better underſtood, than generally deſerved.

may

may have been their misfortune to have placed too great confidence in our ſex: And the wrongs and injuries received from us have been, and too often are, the occaſion of the crimes and follies committed by them. So that for one Adam betrayed by an Eve, many of her daughters have, through artful and deluſive promiſes, loſt their virtue, their innocence, their peace.

If it was rightly, it certainly was not kindly done in Adam, ſo ſoon to have left her. How much deſired, how greatly longed for, before ſhe came; and when received, how ſoon neglected. We might be ſurpriſed at ſuch ungenerous treatment, did not modern examples ſhew, that fond and paſſionate deſires, when gratified, ſoon become cool and indifferent; and thoſe, for whom we expreſſed the moſt tender and endearing affections, are forſaken and deſerted, or treated rather as ſlaves of brutiſh luſt, than objects of chaſte and pure love. By leaving her alone ſhe was more expoſed to the attacks of the tempter, and more liable to be ſeduced by his artful ſuggeſtions; who, it is probable for obvious reaſons, would not have accoſted her in the preſence of her huſband: That ſhe erred therefore, may have been owing to a want of affection in him.

Another complaint againſt Eve is her unparellelled baſeneſs and cruelty, in knowingly ſe-

ſeducing Adam into a commiſſion of ſin, and thereby involving him, and his poſterity, in the puniſhment of it. Her love and affection, if ſhe really had any, would ſurely have withheld her from ſo foul an act. You have before ſeen, what love and affection ſhe owed to one, who ſeemed to have expoſed her as a prey to the tempter. But what is urged as a motive to have diſſuaded her from it, her love and affection, was the real cauſe of doing it. When having ate of the fruit ſhe found that the puniſhment was not immediately inflicted, as it had been threatened, ſo far from imagining that ſhe had done wrong, ſhe might naturally have entertained hopes of receiving the promiſed good; and full of theſe hopes ſhe haſtens to her huſband, and perfectly innocent, and free from any deſigns of doing him an injury, (for ſhe herſelf had ſuffered none) offers to him the fruit; that if any good, as ſhe expected, would follow, he might be equally partaker of it with her.

The ſacred hiſtorian ſufficiently clears Eve from this baſeneſs, acquainting us that what ſhe did, was before ſhe was ſenſible of the folly committed; which ſhe did not diſcover, till after Adam, cheriſhing the ſame expectations, had complied with her requeſt: *Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew, that they were naked.* Adam could not have juſtly reproached her, becauſe he knew his

duty, and the conſequence of tranſgreſſing it had been plainly communicated to him; yet when God expoſtulated with him, he endeavoured by an artful and mean inſinuation to excuſe himſelf, by accuſing his wife as the aggreſſor, and pleading that what he had done was through ignorance: *And he ſaid, the woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* But he needed no perſuaſive, to what he of himſelf was too well diſpoſed; no motive to induce him to the fatal act, but what before had engaged his conſort, the pleaſing and inviting proſpect of becoming wiſer, than he was.

Weak and unjuſt then was the apology, unleſs it can be ſuppoſed, that ſhe gave him of the fruit, without acquainting him from what tree it was taken: But this is wickedneſs ſo great, behaviour ſo ungenerous, that none but the author of our miſery could have been engaged in. It was his own free and voluntary act; he muſt otherwiſe have been the object of mercy, not of juſtice.

Thongh we cannot excuſe, we may further extenuate the guilt of Eve. The ſacred hiſtory is ſilent concerning any extraordinary or divine communication of the law to Eve, as had been given to Adam: Her obligations therefore to obedience were not ſo ſtrong and powerful; from him, not from God, ſhe learnt her duty. This it was, that made the attempt

attempt of Satan ſucceſsful; this it was, that prevailed with her to credit the ſaying, *That though ſhe ate of the tree, ſhe ſhould not ſurely die*; for ſhe might have imagined, that her huſband was miſtaken as to the conſequence of ſin; which belief or perſuaſion, if true, muſt have powerfully urged her to the unhappy deed: And the contrary opinion cannot be collected from the context. This ſeems to have been the reaſon, why Satan addreſſed himſelf to Eve, rather than Adam; becauſe he had received the law immediately from God himſelf, and conſequently was not ſo eaſy to be impoſed upon, or deceived, by an artful miſrepreſentation of it.

Having endeavoured to ſet forth the true character of Eve in this important and intereſting affair, which through prejudice, rather than ignorance, hath been hitherto concealed, we ſhall now attempt to vindicate her daughters of the preſent age from the folly and extravagance of which they have been with the ſame injuſtice accuſed by thoſe, who are better read in effects, than underſtand, or may be willing to require into, the cauſes that produce them.

THE FIRST COMPLAINT IS,

That they are extravagant and indecent in their dreſs; that they take up ſo much time, in plaiting of their hair, and putting on of apparel, that

they ſeem as if made for none other purpoſe: And the manner of adjuſting their trinkets is ſo negligent and unſeemly, that chaſtity is almoſt exploded, and modeſty hath loſt her native charm, and knows not how to bluſh.

Granting all this to be true: Muſt not the women ſo dreſs as to pleaſe their huſbands? What they do, is in obedience to their commands, not to ſuit their own taſte: And they are fond of, and admire the faſhions, becauſe they too well perceive and know, that they are the beſt recommendations to favour and eſteem. It is our weakneſs, but their prudence to conform to the prevailing cuſtoms of the times: and we wiſh, that it was as reſonable, as it ſeems to be expedient; as conformable to the rules of decency and modeſty, as it is neceſſary for the ſex, thus to ſhew their love and affection for us.

You ſee then the cauſe of theſe follies, and if they really appear to be ſuch, as opportunities offer, you muſt condemn, not approve; muſt expreſs a diſtaſte for, not diſcover any pleaſure in them. But if the modes in taſte delight, you muſt not complain of the expence in ſupporting them, nor upbraid them, if to be ſubſervient to your will they are frequently expoſed, and ſometimes fall into temptations, that may prove dangerous to their virtue, and hurtful to your peace.

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As this reformation is not likely to begin, where it ſhould, we ſhall make uſe of one motive to induce the fair to the good work: That the men encourage and indulge you in theſe vanities, leſt by ſtudying the improvement of the mind, you ſhould be found to exceed them as much in good ſenſe, as you now do (though oftentimes at the expence of religion, and the abuſe of a fine underſtanding,) in dreſs and complaiſance.

THE SECOND COMPLAINT IS,

That they are exceſſively fond of the public diverſions and entertainments.

From whom is it that they receive invitatations to thoſe places? Who are their companions, and aſſociates? If it is out of pride and vanity to make an appearance, who are they that ſit as ſpectators? Is not our own ſex as paſſionately fond of theſe things? Innocent, if not indulged, and then only criminal, when our circumſtances will not permit us to partake of them or they are of ſuch a nature as will corrupt our morals, or draw us off from attending upon the neceſſary duties and engagements in life.

But if any bad effects do follow from frequenting theſe places, the cenſure ſhould not come from thence, where the example is ſet. It is very common, though ridiculous and ab-

abſurd, to throw out reflections, where we are equally culpable with the aggreſſors; to condemn thoſe follies in others, which if not openly, we may ſecretly practiſe. The beſt way to reform abuſes, is firſt to clear ourſelves from ſuſpicions of guilt. Abſtinence would be badly recommended by a glutton; temperance, from a drunkard; chaſtity, from a debauchee. And, certainly declamations againſt pleaſures will be vainly employed by thoſe, who gladly embrace every opportunity of partaking of them. If then you would diſengage their affections, you muſt avoid being ſeen at ſuch places; the contrary behaviour, muſt rather excite, than allay deſire.

THE THIRD COMPLAINT IS,

That when they are not diverting themſelves abroad, the time is ſpent at home, not in reading good and pious books, but memoirs, romances, &c.

It is wiſhed that we did not firſt write them, and afterwards recommend the peruſal; which are read by many, rather to make themſelves agreeable company, than from an approbation of ſuch writings; for the faſhion is ſo general, that a perſon ignorant of them appears to a great diſadvantage in company, with no little reflection upon his taſte.

The prejudice they are of to the morals, is much greater than commonly imagined.

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The plainneſs and ſimplicity of the ſtile, the wit and humour interſperſed, and the ſtory pleaſantly related, are powerful recommendations in their favour: But their words though ſmoother than oil, are as daggers in the heart; like the flatterer's ſoft pernicious tongue, they ſtrike the paſſions, but hurt the underſtanding; like lightning they pierce us with the arrows of death, before we ſuſpect any danger, and we loſe our virtue, as men loſe their lives by aſſaſſins, without knowing from whence the wound is given. They pleaſe the imagination, but injure our virtue; they amuſe indeed and entertain, but it is often at the expence of our innocence in reverſion; they never made one libertine honeſt, but have enſnared many an innocent perſon into miſery and ruin. It would be of conſiderable benefit to the cauſe of virtue and piety, and the deſtruction not of a true, but falſe taſte, to have ſuch writings ſuppreſſed: It would be the means of promoting real, not imaginary knowledge, and we ſhould be read in that, which would make us both wiſer, and better.

THE FOURTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they are not ſuch fond mothers as the patriarchal dames, who thought it no diſgrace to rear their own offspring, and inſpect into the affairs of the family.

That

That the pattern is not imitated, is true; there would be fewer bankruptcies, and leſs misfortunes if it was. But who are to blame? Thoſe who reproach. To preſerve a fine ſhape, and to appear in public company to an advantage, the tenderneſs and affection of the parent are given up, and nature is forced to ſubmit to faſhion. This is done to oblige the fine gentleman, who commands it, and who cannot bear the noiſe of the ſqualling brat, &c. The texture of his brain is ſo fine, and his ſtomach ſo delicate, as to be in danger of receiving an injury from it. Thus the weakneſs of the woman is pretended to excuſe the fantaſticalneſs and effeminacy of the man.

THE FIFTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they are not, what in a moſt ſolemn manner they have promiſed to be, obedient and ſubmiſſive to their huſbands; the ſcriptures alſo poſitively require, that they ſhould ſo be in every thing.

Do not the ſame ſcriptures as poſitively require, that huſbands ſhould honour their wives, ſpeak kindly and tenderly and love them as themſelves? That obedience is not paid, proceeds not from contumacy. The perſons who demand it, are generally of a tyrannical diſpoſition, and little deſerving of it. Matrimony is a federal rite,

wherein

wherein two parties mutually and voluntarily conſent upon certain conditions to take each other. And it is upon the performance of thoſe conditions, that obedience is claimed, and will undoubtedly be paid, when they are by the other party performed. Where kindneſs and love are, there eſteem and reſpect will be.

Though the treatment which Socrates received from Xantippe, was not very becoming, ſhe might have had reaſons for being angry. The philoſopher perhaps got the better of the huſband, his fondneſs of letters might have leſſened his affection, and rendered him an unſociable creature. Happy however would it be for the ſex to have a Socrates. This would be rather accounted a bleſſing, than a misfortune, compared with what they ſuffer from the company and converſation of the churl, the ſot, the fop, and the fool; the miſerable portion of many a fair! If to ſuch any obedience is paid, any reſpect ſhewn, it is certainly more than they merit, more than they can have the leaſt pretenſion to, either from reaſon, or ſcripture: It ſeems to be a work of ſupererogation.

We are not for depriving the man of his natural authority, but adviſe him not to exceed the rules of prudence and moderation in the exercile of it, and it will then produce the proper effect. When commands are

the reſult of a perverſe and capricious humour, and obedience is made the cloak for ſlavery, it is no wonder, that galled with ſuch cruel and ungenerous treatment, they ſhould not appear paſſive.

THE SIXTH COMPLAINT IS

That their private converſation abounds with ſcandal and defamation.

The complaint is not without foundation. We know not how it is, that a practice ſo univerſally condemned as weak, ridiculous, and abſurd, ſhould ſo univerſally prevail: Yet it is not confined to the tea-table. Though the other ſex is ſeverely and unfairly treated on that account, we are equally, if not more culpable. What are coffee houſes, but places where the men daily aſſemble to talk and hear ſlander and defamation? What are clubs but ſet meetings for the ſame purpoſes? The cenſures of the fair, which are generally confined to things pertaining to taſte, politeneſs, and dreſs, are not ſo dangerous and miſchievous in their conſequences, as thoſe, which concern the moral, mercantile, and political conduct and behaviour of men. The lady may be chagrined, and have the vapours for a time from ſuch indelicacies; but the man loſes his credit and reputation by ſuch injurious treatment. It is better, therefore to drop

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the complaint, till we ourſelves are free from the vice complained of; ſince accuſations of the fair will be only aggravations of our own guilt, and the judgment paſſed upon them be pronouncing ſentence againſt ourſelves.

THE SEVENTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they come to church not from a ſenſe of duty or devotion, but to make an appearance, to ſee, and afterwards to talk of, the modes and faſhions of dreſs.

Allowing the complaint to be true, is it not better to come in any manner, than not to come at all? Is it not better, than to ſet a bad example to ſervants, family, or dependants, by junketting at home, or taking pleaſure abroad? It may in the end have this good effect, that as they are there ſhewn the way to heaven, it may be fairly preſumed, and charitably hoped, that ſome time or other they will take it into conſideration, and think about going thither. No ſuch good effect can be expected, or even hoped for, when the ſervice is not only neglected, but attendance not given.

That their behaviour is offenſive to the pious and devout, is eaſier ſaid, than proved: For where true devotion is, there the mind is ſo intent upon the heavenly object, as neither to ſee, nor regard, nor attend to any other. We may therefore juſtly ſuppoſe, that thoſe who

make the complaint, are little acquainted with the nature or practice of devotion; and the pious who are offended, to be thoſe who are as fond of gazing, as the others of being gazed at, and uſe the plea to excuſe or palliate their own negligence and irreverence.

It is much to be wiſhed, that there was a little more devotion in both ſexes: But it ſhould not be concealed, that they are more conſtant and regular in their attendance at divine worſhip. Whether it proceeds from a real or pretended piety, it deſerves praiſe and commendation; ſince the example is good, and it ſhews a regard for decency and order; which cannot be ſaid of thoſe, who frequently abſent, or only come when it ſuits their humour, or the weather will not permit them to go elſewhere.

THE EIGHTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they are much addicted to gaming, as if their pride and vanity were not ſufficient to exhauſt our treaſure and ſubſtance.

Their conduct ſeems rather an object of pity, than reſentment, when at an unfavourable caſt we ſee the fair loſing all the lovelineſs and tenderneſs of her ſex. The fault may be extenuated, not excuſed. Cards and dice, it is probable, were at firſt uſed by them to divert the many melancholy hours they were alone: But

But as from an innocent amuſement gaming hath been made by the other ſex a buſineſs, the example hath been imitated by the fair: who think that it cannot be criminal, nor unlawful, to endeavour to recover by cards and dice, what their huſbands have loſt by cock-fightings, horſe races, &c. or if there is any pleaſure in gaming, that they have a right to partake of it, ſince they only hazard the loſs of what the others are not diſpoſed to preſerve. As few are in the end great gainers by this vice, ſince what hath been acquired one day hath been often ſucceeded by a much greater loſs the next, it would be better for both, and their families, not to follow it.

THE NINTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they not only appear negligent in domeſtic affairs, their peculiar province, but are apt to intrude into matters, with which they have no concern.

How far it may be right we know not; yet it is prudent in the woman, if ſhe hath a capacity for buſineſs, to acquaint herſelf with it. The man who hath a real regard for the future welfare and proſperity of his family, ſhould encourage and indulge an uſeful, not a vain, curioſity. In caſe of accidents, or death, they would not be, as they too often are, through ignorance, made the prey of the artful and deſigning

ſigning, or for want of this knowledge be obliged to give up a decent and comfortable ſubſiſtance.

Little injury, but much good, hath proceeded from ſuch a communication. Many have proved worthy of the confidence placed in them: And their company hath been both agreeable and beneficial. There have been inſtances, if they are rare and uncommon, which may have happened for want of proper encouragement, wherein that ſex hath appeared with equal, if not ſuperior advantages to us. It is time to have done with a complaint, of which the ſex, if guilty, are rather deſerving of commendation than cenſure, ſince this inquiſitive humour is exerciſed from pure love, and a ſincere regard for our intereſt.

THE TENTH COMPLAINT IS,

That they imitate not the example of ancient matrons in frugality and oeconomy.

This complaint may be true; yet it is imprudent in us to make it, unleſs we imagine that from cenſuring vices in others, we ſhould be thought to poſſeſs the oppoſite virtues. We wiſh that this was not the principal motive for cenſuring the actions of mankind. The weak and ignorant have been impoſed upon by it, and led to entertain an high opinion

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of thoſe, who publickly condemn vices, which they have been found to have had no averſion to in private. This practice hath been generally followed, becauſe it hath generally proved ſucceſsful. It is a practice however, that ſhould not be entirely diſcouraged, when it may be followed with ſucceſs; becauſe it not only diſplays the amiableneſs of virtue, but renders vice odious and infamous, which hath oftentimes had a good effect upon the vulgar.

Our cenſure againſt the fair in this reſpect loſes its weight and force, as we are alike faulty. Extravagance and prodigality are vices, though not univerſally practiſed in this age, as ſome have falſly aſſerted, too viſible to be denied. *Never ſure was there ſuch an age as this*, hath been the cant term in all ages to repreſent the follies of the people. It is a popular expreſſion, and therefore hath been adopted; for the vulgar are more fond of raillery and exclamation, than of praiſe and commendation. For the credit of the preſent age, we will venture to aſſert, notwithſtanding we may provoke the reſentment of modern declaimers, that, compared with ſome times, not a century back, we are ſaints; and though it is not ſo good, as it ought to be, there is no reaſon for looking upon this

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land to be an hell, and the inhabitants of it, a few excepted, to be little better, than devils.

To return to the complaint. The beſt cenſure we can beſtow upon the ſex, is to ſet the pattern of frugality in ourſelves; and it need not be doubted, that they who are fond of imitating us even in our foibles, will be backward in following us here. It will be in vain to urge the neceſſity and uſefulneſs, of what our own conduct ſhews, that we have a diſtaſte for. The beſt recommendation of any virtue is example; which oftentimes influences, when precepts fail. It is for the private intereſt and happineſs of both to practiſe it, and it may be of ſome uſe to the publick; though it doth not receive that detriment from the contrary practice, as commonly imagined. Thoſe vices tend to the impoveriſhing of a few, and the enriching many. Trade in ſome of its branches flouriſhes; and as long as the artizan, the manufacturer, and the merchant are encouraged, and receive the reward of their labour and induſtry, though private evils, they cannot be termed public nuiſances. If only things neceſſary and uſeful were to be ſought for and procured, as ſome very gravely tell us, (thought it is not eaſy for them to ſay, what is ſtrictly uſeful and neceſſary) trade and commerce would be at an end, arts and ingenuity, which are juſtly eſteemed divine

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bleſſings, would prove a curſe; for the ſupport and encouragement of which, ſuperfluities may be procured. When our circumſtances will not admit of ſuch profuſion, or it may be prejudicial and injurious to friends or relations, or hurtful to ſelf, it then becomes criminal, and is the practice deſerving of cenſure.

THE LAST GENERAL COMPLAINT IS,

That they have been, in all ages, and ſtill are, the cauſe of much evil; many tragical events are recorded in ancient hiſtory, occaſioned by their luſt, their pride, or their vanity; modern times have alſo experienced their power and influence; in private families, as well as in ſtates and empires, they have been felt.

We ſhall not here recriminate, and prove from hiſtory, ancient and modern, that they have been the cauſe of more good than evil. Allowing the complaint to be juſt, would you have the ſex to be extinct? For none other remedy can be applied. The ſituation of Adam will acquaint you, how comfortleſs and diſconſolate your ſituation would be, if your requeſt was granted. Your philoſophy would be of little uſe here, as you are made of the ſame materials, and have the ſame natural paſſions and affections.

There have been ſome, who have expreſſed an averſion to females; but in many this hath happened through ſpleen or diſappointment; in others from an auſtere and melancholy diſpoſition, or a fondneſs for a recluſe and retired life; who have been equally averſe to the converſation of men as women, and have not been leſs enemies to ſociety, than to human nature: yet even ſuch have found it not a little difficult to conquer a paſſion, which the ſupreme being, for wiſe and uſeful purpoſes, implanted in us; and many of theſe pretenders to auſterity have been detected in unlawful gratifications, and others in actions, which decency requires to be nameleſs.

With all their evils it is better to retain them amongſt us, and be content to take them, as our church directs, for better, for worſe, ſince it would be the worſt misfortune that could happen to us, not to have them at all. If we are not wanting in tenderneſs and affection, we ſhall have no reaſon to repent of the choice; we ſhall live happy and comfortable, as otherwiſe we muſt be, and that juſtly, unhappy and miſerable.

If the women of this differ much from thoſe of the patriarchal age, are not ſuch fond mothers, nor ſuch obedient wives; if they are not ſuch, as they were in the early days of chriſtianity, remarkable for their piety and devo-

devotion; if they are not, according to the apoſtle's rule, decent in apparel, and modeſt in behaviour, the men cannot reproach or upbraid them; ſince theſe things chiefly happen through their bad example or approbation, or to pleaſe and gratify their pride and vanity. Beſides, have they leſs degenerated from the ancients? A reformation is wanted in both ſexes; it would be greatly for their advantage and intereſt to mend their manners, and correct their taſte: But the men muſt lead the way, and when they ſhall appear ſober and temperate, love their pleaſures leſs, and mind their buſineſs more, ſpend their leiſure hours at home with their families, not be ſotting and trifling abroad, nor take delight in fopperies, which is rather the misfortune, than the fault of the ſex to be engaged in, to pleaſe and humour us, we will venture to affirm, that there will be no opportunity for complaining of their gaiety, their vanity, and their extravagance.

We might now conſider the complaints of the fair; but as this would rather prevent than procure a reconciliation between the parties, it is more prudent to drop them: And it would be in ſome ſort needleſs, ſince it is preſumed, that no one of our ſex could, with decency and propriety, attempt a vindication, and it cannot be expected, that the injured

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would undertake it. It is therefore hoped, that the one party will ceaſe from complaints, and the other from affording matter of complaint; that each will be more ready to correct, than find faults; to forgive little indiſcretions, which, as it is the weakneſs of human nature to be frequently guilty of, ſhould rather kindle compaſſion, than anger, in our breaſts; and to bear with, and love, each other.

FINIS.